

YOU CAN HELP  
A VERMONT CHILD  
— FROM A DAY  
TO A LIFETIME



#### WHO CAN APPLY

Applicants can be single, married, living with a partner, or joined through a civil union. Applications are considered regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.

#### WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

The children in foster care each have their own unique needs, desires, and interests. That's why we need all types of people to care for them.

If you can answer yes to the following questions, you are the type of person we are looking for.

- Do you enjoy being around children? Have a sense of humor?
- Can you treat children in foster care like your own and stick by them even if they act out?
- Can you provide direction in a nurturing way?
- Are you compassionate? Patient? Open-minded?
- Are you willing to ask for help when you need it?
- Can you work as part of a team?

#### THE SUPPORT AVAILABLE

There is a lot of support available to people who help children in foster care. Depending on the way you choose to help, that support might include:

- Financial assistance
- Subsidized childcare
- Medical benefits
- Training and networking
- Respite care
- Crisis support
- Peer support
- Post-adoption services

#### ABOUT PROJECT FAMILY

In 2000, the Vermont Department for Children and Families joined with the Lund Family Center — our state's largest and oldest nonprofit adoption agency — to create Project Family.

We are dedicated to:

1. Finding parents for Vermont children in need.
2. Helping parents and children access the support and services they need.

We envision a society in which every child feels safe, cared for, and part of a loving family. One where foster care is understood, embraced, and supported by everyone.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact us if you would like to get more detailed information about any of the programs covered in this brochure. We are here to help!

UP FOR THE  
CHALLENGE? GIVE  
A CHILD A CHANCE.  
YOU CAN MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE!



projectfamily

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"IT IS A HARD JOB,  
BUT REWARDING AND  
IMPORTANT AND  
WORTHWHILE. BUT  
IT'S NOT FOR  
EVERYONE. IT TAKES  
A LOT OF PATIENCE,  
UNDERSTANDING,  
AND PERSEVERANCE."

A Child  
A Challenge  
A Chance



DID YOU KNOW THAT...?

- About 1,200 children in Vermont — from infants to teens — currently live away from their families in foster care.
- These children and their families need caring people like you to help them through a difficult time.
- There are many ways you can help — from a day to a lifetime.
- You don't have to be married or rich to do your part; all kinds of people are needed.

ABOUT FOSTER CARE

Sometimes children are abused or neglected and it is not safe for them to stay at home. When this happens, family courts transfer their custody to the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF).

Some children, but most often teens, come into DCF custody because they've either committed a delinquent act or they are without or beyond their parents' control.

In all of these situations, the state needs to find safe, nurturing places for them to live while they can't be at home. This is called *foster care*. While it is not a magical cure-all, it is a time-proven way of helping children and families in need.

FACT: MOST  
CHILDREN WHO  
COME INTO DCF  
CUSTODY RETURN  
HOME TO THEIR  
PARENTS.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

There are several ways you can help children and families.

Provide Respite Care

Respite care is much like foster care, but for shorter periods of time. It can be for a few hours, a day, a weekend, or a week or two.

Respite providers allow foster parents and children to take much-needed breaks so that they can do other things or just have time away from each other.

Having these breaks can often make the difference between a successful placement and one that ends in another move for a child.

Provide Foster Care

Foster parents open their hearts and homes to children in need — for a few weeks, months, years, and sometimes a lifetime.

They also:

- Help children to heal.
- Support efforts to reunite children with their parents.
- Provide the parents with time to focus on themselves and the work they need to do to be able to parent their children safely.
- Frequently provide the children who cannot safely return home with permanent families. In fact, most children who become freed for adoption in Vermont are adopted by their foster parents.

Adopt A Waiting Child

Sometimes foster parents are unable to adopt and new families need to be found.

On any given day in Vermont, there are about 100 children waiting in foster care for families to adopt them. Most are school-aged and many have special needs related to the abuse or neglect they've experienced.

Adoptive parents give the waiting children what we all want:

- A sense of belonging.
- A place to call home.
- People who love us unconditionally.

Help In Other Ways

If the other options are not for you, or at least not at this time, below are a few examples of other ways you can help. Feel free to contact us for more ideas!

- Help us get the word out about the need for families.
- Donate goods such as winter coats, sneakers, and sports equipment.
- Donate funds for prom dresses, driving lessons, camp, class trips, or college application fees.
- Donate services such as haircuts or senior pictures.
- Support teens who are leaving foster care by helping them furnish an apartment or paying their first month's rent.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

You could get the opportunity to:

- Help end the cycle of abuse.
- See a family come back together.
- Give back to your community.
- Watch a child blossom and grow.
- Help shape a young life.
- Experience the joy of parenting — for the first time, or again if your children are grown.
- Learn and grow as a parent and person.
- Make a positive difference in the life of a child.
- Experience an amazing sense of satisfaction.